



We Forgot Merle Haggard's Warning

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of inflation.

The issue of lost freedoms helped spur me 30 years ago to write a book titled *Lost Rights* chronicling how “Americans’ liberty is perishing beneath the constant growth of government power.” When I recently updated the political damage report in a book titled *Last Rights*, the late 20th century seemed practically a golden era of freedom in hindsight. In recent decades, federal, state, and local governments have unleashed themselves from the Constitution and commandeered vast swaths of Americans’ lives.

The worst regulatory abuses of the 1990s still exist and plenty of new bureaucratic depredations have been added to the lineup.

In the 1990s, federal regulators censored beer bottles, prohibiting breweries from revealing the alcohol content on the label. That prohibition ended but federal censorship multiplied a hundredfold. On July 4, 2023, federal judge Terry Doughty condemned the Biden administration for potentially “the most massive attack against free speech in United States history,” including “suppressing millions of protected free speech postings by American citizens,” as a federal appeals court ruled last September. Americans’ criticism of Covid policy was secretly suppressed millions of times thanks to federal threats and string-pulling. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court took a dive on this issue on Wednesday, seizing upon bullshit procedural grounds to avoid condemning federal censorship.

foreign nation. The following month during a CNN town hall, Biden derided vaccine skeptics as murderers who only wanted “the freedom to kill you” with Covid [flu renamed]. But the Biden administration deceived Americans by covering up the stunning failure of the vaccines to prevent Covid infections and transmission – a failure that was known even before the mandate was decreed. [Because there is no such thing as covid and the vaccines are designed to kill not to prevent anything.]

After millions of Americans took the jab thanks to his edict, the Supreme Court struck down his order. But neither Biden nor his political appointees have any liability for that illicit command or the side effects of the vax, including the vast increase in myocarditis in young males.

Decades ago, politicians would not have dared to padlock all the churches and synagogues in their domain. But extrapolations of wildly inaccurate [faked] Covid mortality forecasts sufficed to nullify the First Amendment’s freedom of religion. Nevada decreed that casinos could operate at half-capacity with hundreds of gamblers at a time for example, but churches could not have more than 50 worshippers regardless of their size. When the Supreme Court refused to overturn that edict, Justice Neil Gorsuch dissented: “There is no world in which the Constitution permits Nevada to favor Caesars Palace over Calvary Chapel,” the church that sought the injunction.

a much lower vaccination rate than other New Yorkers. Radio host Grant Stinchfield condemned California's vaccine passports, grousing that in Los Angeles, "You can shit on the street, shoot drugs in [a] crack tent on the sidewalk and even steal anything [worth] less than 900 bucks but now you have to show papers to get in a restaurant or gym!?!?"

After Washington, DC's mayor imposed a vaccine passport regime, an upscale Dupont Circle coffee shop welcomed patrons with ominous signs: "Masks on & Vaccine Cards Out!" That was as welcoming as the slogan: "Come Sip with the Gestapo!" That coffee shop went out of business a few months later. (The DC passport regime helped propel Libertarian Institute editor Hunter DeRensis to move to the freer state of Florida.) Former FDA press chief Emily Miller commented: "The purpose of a vaccine passport is for the #ScaredVaccinated to have a false sense of security."

Politicians sought to "compensate" victims of lockdowns with trillions of dollars of Covid "stimulus" spending that helped unleash the worst inflation of this century. "I wish a buck was still silver" was the first line of Haggard's 1982 song. The US Congress declared in 1792 that silver and gold were the foundation of the nation's currency. From 1878 onwards, the US government sold silver certificates with this declaration: "This certifies that there is on deposit in the Treasury of the United States of America One Dollar in Silver Payable to the Bearer on Demand." In 1967, Congress passed the Act to Authorize Adjustments in the Amount of Outstanding Silver Certificates, "adjusting" the

snoops become guardian angels? Fifty-five percent of American adults support government suppression of “false information,” even though only 20 percent trust the government. Relying on dishonest officials to eradicate “false information” is not the height of prudence.

How can freedom survive if so many people cannot politically add two plus two? A September 2023 poll revealed that almost half of Democrats believed that free speech should be legal “only under certain circumstances” (perhaps excluding criticism of their party’s elected officials). Support for censorship is stronger among young folks whose schooling perhaps smote their natural love of freedom.

Subjugation is becoming the norm and freedom the exception. Would earlier generations of Americans have tolerated Transportation Security Administration agents pointlessly squeezing billions of butts and boobs while never catching a single terrorist? Would they have tolerated the FBI investigating traditional Catholics based on far-fetched fears about their religious beliefs? Would they have tolerated a president’s reelection campaign trumpeting the notion that a vote for his opponent is a vote for Hitler?

Haggard’s 1982 song had a piercing refrain: “Are we rolling downhill like a snowball headed for Hell?” He tacked on an upbeat ending: “The best of the free life is still yet to come.” But he lost hope and lamented before his death: “In 1960, when I came out of prison as an ex-convict, I had more freedom under parolee supervision than there’s

Nowadays, politicians merely need to promise salvation to justify further decimating freedom. The prevailing submission to Covid lockdown decrees stunned many observers who expected far more hell-raising protests. The submission to Covid lockdowns and other decrees epitomizes the failure of either (or both) realism and courage among much of the populace. Do Americans recognize that once a president escapes the confines of the Constitution, they will eventually find themselves shackled?

How many Americans have learned the bitter political lessons of the p[l]andemic? As long as most people can be frightened, almost everyone can be subjugated. In the long run, people have more to fear from politicians than from [fake] viruses. Liberty is invaluable regardless of how many politicians seek to destroy it or how many fools fail to cherish it.

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